

PATENT  
 Appl. No. 09/894,628  
 Attorney Docket No. 450100-03297

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A contents control method for managing said contents based on key code information containing content usage information set within a range that the contents can be utilized, said method comprising the steps of:

comparing said content usage rights information with status code information showing the usage status of said contents;

wherein said content usage rights information contains a predetermined number of times for using the contents or a predetermined end date/time showing the usable end time until which said contents can be used;

determining whether the contents are used within the range set by said content usage rights information;

comparing said status code information with output setting information having a threshold value within the range of said contents usage rights information to warn by warning report data when in proximity to said contents usage rights in the case where said status code information is within the range of said contents usage rights information,

wherein said warning report data alerts a user that a usage limit of said content, as restricted by the content usage rights information, is near~~warning enables anticipating an inability to utilize said contents;~~

sending said warning report data to a report address using an electronic mail when said status code information nears the threshold value of said output setting information;

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disabling use of the contents when said status code information exceeds the threshold value of said output setting information; and  
deleting the contents after a period of elapsed time for deletion has elapsed.

2. (Previously Presented) A contents control method according to claim 1, further comprising

outputting invalidation report data when the use of said contents has been disabled.

3. (Previously Presented) A contents control method according to claim 2, further comprising

outputting deletion report data when said contents are deleted.

4. (Original) A contents control method according to claim 1, wherein loading period information set with the loading timing for loading said contents usage right information, said status code information and said output setting information are set in said setting information, and said status code information, said contents usage information and said setting information are compared based on said loading interval information.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A contents control method according to claim 3, further comprising

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sending said invalidation report data and said deletion report data to said report address using an electronic mail.

7. (Currently Amended) A contents control device for managing said contents based on key code information containing content usage information set within a range where the contents can be utilized, said device comprising:

memory storage means stored with said contents, said key code information, and status code information showing the usage status of said contents, and output setting information having a threshold value within the range of said contents usage rights information for warning by warning report data when in proximity to said threshold value of said contents usage rights,

wherein said contents usage rights information contains a predetermined number of times for using the contents or a predetermined end date/time showing the usable end time until which said contents can be used;

wherein said warning report data alerts a user that a usage limit of said content, as restricted by the content usage rights information, is near~~warning enables anticipating an inability to utilize said contents;~~

key code monitor means to control usage limits of said contents by comparing said contents usage rights, said status code information and said output setting information to determine whether the contents are used within the range set by said content usage rights information, said key code monitor means comprising a function to send said warning report data to a report address using an electronic mail when said status code information nears the threshold value of said output setting information;

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content output means containing a function to reproduce said contents of said memory storage means and a function to output said warning report data;

disabling means for disabling use of the contents when said status code information exceeds the threshold value of said output setting information; and

deleting means for deleting the contents after a period of elapsed time for deletion has elapsed.

8. (Currently Amended) A program storage medium for storing the contents control program for managing said contents based on key code information containing content usage information set within a range where the contents can be utilized, said medium comprising:

memory storage means stored with said contents, said key code information, and status code information showing the usage status of said contents, and output setting information having a threshold value within the range of said contents usage rights information for warning by warning report data when in proximity to said threshold value of said contents usage rights,

wherein said contents usage rights information contains a predetermined number of times for using the contents or a predetermined end date/time showing the usable end time until which said contents can be used;

wherein said warning report data alerts a user that a usage limit of said content, as restricted by the content usage rights information, is near~~warning enables anticipating an inability to utilize said contents;~~

key code monitor means to control usage limits of said contents by comparing said contents usage rights, said status code information and said output setting information to determine whether the contents are used within the range set by said content usage rights

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information, said key code monitor means comprising a function to send said warning report data to a report address using an electronic mail when said status code information nears the threshold value of said output setting information;

content output means containing a function to reproduce said contents of said memory storage means and a function to output said warning report data;

disabling means for disabling use of the contents when said status code information exceeds the threshold value of said output setting information; and

deleting means for deleting the contents after a period of elapsed time for deletion has elapsed.

9. (Currently Amended) A contents control apparatus for managing said contents based on key code information containing content usage information set within a range that the contents can be utilized, said apparatus comprising:

first comparison means for comparing said content usage rights information with status code information showing the usage status of said contents;

wherein said content usage rights information contains a predetermined number of times for using the contents or a predetermined end date/time showing the usable end time until which said contents can be used;

determining means for determining whether the contents are used within the range set by said content usage rights information;

second comparison means for comparing said status code information with output setting information having a threshold value within the range of said contents usage rights information

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to warn by warning report data when in proximity to said contents usage rights in the case where said status code information is within the range of said contents usage rights information, wherein said warning report data alerts a user that a usage limit of said content, as restricted by the content usage rights information, is near~~warning enables anticipating an inability to utilize said contents;~~

output means for sending said warning report data to a report address using an electronic mail when said status code information nears the threshold value of said output setting information;

disabling means for disabling use of the contents when said status code information exceeds the threshold value of said output setting information; and

deleting means for deleting the contents after a period of elapsed time for deletion has elapsed.